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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - FEBRUARY 26

REF: KINSHASA 176

¶1. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

End of Operation Umoja Wetu (Our Unity)

¶2. (SBU) Speaking at the February 25 ceremony marking the withdrawal of RDF troops from the DRC (reftel), General Numbi, Commander of the joint operations, acknowledged that "the enemy has not been totally destroyed," but the FARDC-RDF efforts had greatly diminished the FDLR's capabilities. According to Numbi, since the joint operations began, 153 FDLR had been killed, 13 injured, and 37 captured. DRC Foreign Minister Alexis Tambwe Mwamba exhorted MONUC to become more involved in follow-up actions, now that the RDF had withdrawn.

Security Situation

¶3. (SBU) On February 24, MONUC announced plans to support FARDC extension of operations against the FDLR in South Kivu. In North Kivu, MONUC forces are reportedly ready to deploy in areas cleared of FDLR troops, in an effort to prevent FDLR forces from re-occupying the areas.

Political Developments

¶4. (SBU) According to international media sources, during the week of March 2, the GDRC and CNDP are scheduled to resume UN-mediated talks in Nairobi. A GDRC spokesman indicated that any final agreement would likely include other armed groups present in Eastern DRC.

Humanitarian Situation

¶5. (SBU) Representatives from the humanitarian community met on February 19 to identify appropriate mechanisms and locations for the distribution of assistance in support of IDP returns. Participants agreed to establish local committees in areas of return to register returning IDP's. Participants also stressed the importance of incorporating protection mechanisms associated with assistance delivery in unstable areas of return.

¶6. (SBU) On February 23, OHCA noted a MONUC proposal to provide logistical assistance to transport relief commodities to inaccessible areas in North Kivu. UN cluster leads are meeting the week of February 22 to draw up a list of priority locations and assistance to present to MONUC.

¶7. (SBU) Following the February 22 attack against the Concern compound in Matanda, Masisi, by an unidentified armed group, Concern has temporarily suspended activities in Matanda and Rubaya to assess security conditions over the next two weeks.

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